

2013-2014 School Year

Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Applications

Processing, Eligibility,
Certification, and Verification

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Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application

<http://www.mich.gov/schoolnutrition>

What's New

- School Meals Program Requirements Training PDF
- Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition Cookbook PDF
- Notice to Discontinue in the School Meals Program PDF
- Pricing and Costing Worksheet PDF
- RDCI Exception Request Form PDF
- School Nutrition Programs Summer Workshops PDF
- 2012-2013 Paid Lunch Equity Tool PDF
- Final Rule to Update School Lunches and Breakfasts Presentation PDF
- Quick Guide to Complete a MEQSS 2012 CHIP National School Lunch Program Application PDF
- SY-2012-13 Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application Packet(14 pages) PDF
- Six Cents Certification Materials
- School Year 2012-2013 Free and Reduced Price Schools Meals Family Application Materials
- 12 Steps to Conducting Verification

Will be updated with 2013-2014 materials soon!

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Online and Scanned Applications

The LEA may make free and reduced price family applications and supporting materials available electronically via the Internet.

- ✓ Electronic Signatures permitted
- ✓ Paper Applications may be scanned

USDA/FNS does not evaluate, approve, or endorse any software for application processing. It is the responsibility of the LEA to assure the software complies with all the regulations for certification and verification.

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Homeless Liaisons

Homeless Liaisons

Go to: www.michigan.gov/ofs

1. Scroll to Programs
2. Click Title X - McKinney Vento Homeless

Programs

- [Title Program Overview](#)
- [Section 31a At-Risk](#)
- [Title I, Part A](#)
- [Title I, Part C - Migrant](#)
- [Title I, Part D - Neglected & Delinquent](#)
- [Title II, Part A - Teacher & Principal Training & Recruiting](#)
- [Title III - English Learner & Immigrant Education Programs](#)
- [Title X - McKinney Vento Homeless](#)

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Part 2: Categorical Eligibility

- Only one case number is required to make all students in the household categorically eligible for free meals.
 - The Family Assistance Program (FAP) and the Family Independence Program (FIP) numbers have **nine digits in the case number beginning with the number 1**.
- List the name of the person receiving FAP or FIP benefits and the case number.
- If a case number is provided, only students need to be listed in part 3.

PART 2 - If any member of your household received Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or FSP/R, provide the name and case number for the person who receives benefits.
Name _____ Case Number _____ Bridge Case Numbers and Medicaid Numbers are NOT ACCEPTABLE case numbers
If a case number is provided, only students need to be listed in Part 3.

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Part 2: Categorical Eligibility

- **Qualify as categorically eligible:**
 - Directly certified
 - Foster children
 - Homeless
 - Migrant
 - Head Start
 - SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
 - FDP/IR
 - FAP
 - FIP (TANF)
- **Eligibility is extended:** Most cases above
 - **Exceptions:** Families hosting foster and homeless children, Families with child in Head Start. These families must submit applications for other household members.

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Direct Certification

Students on the Direct Certification Report are automatically certified as eligible for free school meals, as are other members of their household.

- Direct certification takes precedence over an application.
- If a paper application is submitted by a household for children who are directly certified, the LEA must disregard the paper application.
- Access to the direct certification report is through the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS).
- Must be checked 3 times during school year, though recommend checking monthly.

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Categorical Eligibility

Categorical Eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in the household if any member of the household receives benefits from one of these assistance programs.

Assistance Program Households – Entire Household is Free

- **Food Assistance (FAP - SNAP)**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **Family Independence (FIP – MI's TANF)**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **FDPIR**
 - Application



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Other Source Categorical Eligibility

Eligibility for free meals is NOT extended to all children in the household.

Only the Child is Free:

- **Foster Children**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **Homeless, Runaway and Migrant**
 - Signed list from coordinator/liason
- **Head Start/Even Start**
 - Enrollment list from program coordinator

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Foster Child Eligibility

Foster children are categorically eligible for free meals and may be certified without an application.

- The presence of a foster child in the household does **not** convey eligibility for free meals to all children in the household.
- Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as well as any personal income earned by the foster child, on the same household application that includes their non-foster children.
- This may help the other children in the household qualify for free or reduced price meals based on household size and income.

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Foster Child Eligibility

- Eligibility determination for the remainder of the household is based on the household's income (including personal income earned by the foster child) or other categorical eligibility information reported on the application.
- Foster payments received by the family from the placing agency are not considered income and do not need to be reported.
- Guardianship: Legal guardianship is **not** an automatic qualifier for free meals.

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Foster Child Eligibility

For more information :



<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

- Click on Regulations & Policy
- Scroll to Policy
- Click on School Meals
- Scroll to FY 2011
- Click on policy memo: 17-2011 Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Categorical Eligibility of Foster Children (revised) 03-16-2011

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Income Frequency and Conversions

- If there are multiple income sources with more than one frequency, the LEA must **annualize** income by multiplying:
 - Weekly income x 52
 - Bi-weekly income (received every two weeks) x 26
 - Semi-monthly income (received twice a month) x 24
 - Monthly income x 12
- LEAs *cannot* use conversion factors such as 4.33 to convert weekly income or 2.15 to convert bi-weekly income to monthly amounts.
- **If income frequency is the same, there is no need for annualizing.**
- **Income eligibility guidelines** (IEGs) are the household size and income levels determined annually by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- All software programs should be checked for income eligibility guidelines update and must comply.

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Part 5: Adult Household Member Signature and Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number

Part 5 - Signature and Last Four (4) Digits of Adult Household Member (MUST sign and date)

If Part 5 is completed, the adult signing the form must also list the last four (4) digits of his or her Social Security Number or check the "I do not have a Social Security Number box". See Privacy Act Statement on the back of this form.

I hereby promise that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the sponsor will get federal funds based on the information I give. I understand that sponsor officials may verify check the information. Supplemental federal payments give basic information on what you have benefits and may be processed.

Sign Here: Yes No I do not have a Social Security Number

Last Four (4) Digits of Adult Social Security Number: XXXX-XXXX

Name: _____ Date: _____

State: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

- An adult member of the household *must* sign and date the form, list the last four (4) digits of their *Social Security Number*, or check the box "I do not have a Social Security Number."

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Part 6: Racial/Ethnic Data Collection

- This section is **optional** for the household to complete. This racial/ethnic data collection may be used for completing the post award civil rights data collection that is required annually.
- Data can be used to determine if there are disparities between the potentially eligible population and the participating population or if there is discrimination.
- Outreach efforts can be targeted.

Part 6 - Child's Racial/Ethnic Identity (optional)

Check One or More Racial Identities:

American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian

Black or African American White

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Other

Check One Ethnic Identity:

Hispanic or Latino

Neither Hispanic or Latino

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Benefits Prior to Processing Applications

- **30 day grace period for benefits starting the first day of school and up to and including the 30th day for:**
 - Children in households with approved applications from the previous year.
 - Newly enrolled students with approved applications from the LEA from the previous year.
 - Previously approved children who transfer from one school to another under the jurisdiction of the same LEA.
- **Carryover of previous year's eligibility also applies to:**
 - Direct certification
 - Categorical eligibility
 - Head Start
- **The new eligibility determination supersedes the carryover eligibility.**
- **Temporary approval is no longer in effect because of the year-long eligibility provision.**

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Administrative Approval

- If a household fails to apply and the child is known to be eligible, local officials may complete an application on behalf of the child. The completed application should be:
 - Based on the best household size and income information available.
 - **Limited use** in individual situations and must not be used to make eligibility determinations for categories or groups of children.
 - Excluded from verification.
- The household must be notified that the child has been certified to receive free or reduced price benefits.

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Benefit Issuance List

Every school district is required to compile a list with the names of students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. This list should be:

- Updated/revised monthly.
- Used as documentation to support the monthly claim for reimbursement.
- Available at the point of service for a back-up system in case of a power outage or technical difficulty.
- Based on a system that hides free/reduced/paid status of students.

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Sharing Information, Records, and Documentation

Section 7 of the *Eligibility Manual*:

- Keep records for 3 years plus the current year.
- Keep an "inactive" file for those students no longer attending school.
- Parental notification for disclosure
- Eligibility information **must never** be publicized or used in such a way that students' eligibility categories may be recognized by other students.
- The numbers of eligible students, **not names**, can be shared with all programs (parental consent is needed for all other purposes).
- For specific questions and answers regarding disclosure of eligibility, refer to section 7 of the Eligibility Manual.

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Verification

Checking eligibility information for a sample of approved free and reduced price meals applications under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

- Annually, each LEA must select and verify a sample of applications approved for meal benefits.
- The verification sample must be selected from households that have submitted an approved Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application as of October 1 of each year.
- Results must be reported to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) on the LEARS-Verification Summary Report website in January – February of that school year.

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Verification

- **Verification is NOT required for:**
 - Children on the direct certification list or whom are otherwise categorically eligible.
 - Schools only using the Special Milk Program.
 - Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) without day treatment components.
 - CEO schools. However, if a partial CEO district, the non-CEO schools are subject to verification.
- **The LEARS report must still be completed for ALL participants of the Nat'l School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.**
 - There are still certain fields of the report that must be completed by all participants, even if applications are not collected (CEO districts, RCCIs not exempt).

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12 Steps to Verification

1. Determine if your Local Education Authority (LEA) must complete an Improvement Plan.
2. Determine the sampling method your LEA must use to identify applications for verification.
3. Establish the Free and Reduced Price Meals application pool.
4. Calculate the sample size/number of applications that must be verified.
5. Conduct a Confirmation Review of the applications selected for verification.
6. Notify the selected households.
7. Contact the local Department of Human Services office to verify applications with a Food Assistance Program (FAP) or Family Independence Program (FIP) case number by using the following two forms.

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12 Steps to Verification, cont'd

8. Conduct a Follow-up Review for any household that has not responded by the original due date.
9. Notify all households of the final verification determination.
10. Make any required changes to benefit issuance documentation as required from the outcomes of the Verification process by November 15.
11. Complete all required Verification documents.
12. Complete the LEARS-Verification Summary Report **before February 1.**

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Verification for Just Cause

For more information :



<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

- Click on Regulations & Policy
- Scroll to Policy
- Click on School Meals
- Scroll to FY 2012
- Click on policy memo: 14-2012 [Procurement Questions Relevant to the Buy American Provision](#) 02-13-2012

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Verification

- Details of this process are in your manual, including links to the necessary forms and guidance.
- For more information: www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition
 - Scroll to What's New?
 - Click on 12 Steps to Conducting Verification

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Language Assistance

- Households with limited English proficiency (LEP) need to have access to information in other languages.
- LEAs must make a reasonable effort to the maximum extent practicable. This includes:
 - Application materials
 - Communications with households concerning eligibility determinations
- Volunteers may be used, but make sure they understand interpreter ethics – particularly confidentiality.
- Children should not be used as interpreters.

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<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/frp/frp.process.htm>

Prototype Applications

Below are application and verification form prototypes for State agency consideration, all of which were updated in July 2011.

You may also want to use the "I Speak" document to help identify the primary language of non-English speakers. It uses short phrases in 100 languages that an applicant can check to indicate the language they speak. "I Speak" can help Local Educational Agencies select the appropriate translation as well as ensure consistent and effective interaction with applicants who have limited English proficiency.

English	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Arabic	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Armenian	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Cambodian	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Chinese (Traditional)	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Chinese (Simplified)	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Chowan	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Farsi	(.doc)	(.pdf)
French	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Greek	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Gujarati	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Haitian Creole	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Hindi	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Hmong	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Japanese	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Korean	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Kurdish	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Laotian	(.doc)	(.pdf)

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